Soul Bound

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Soul Bound

by HeadcaseKiller

Summary

Sometimes one just has to leave it to fate.

- Inspired by paint me in trust by dinomight
- Inspired by where flowers bloom by daylightbreaks

Soulmates

'Soulmates' the entity types causing Ashido to shriek in joy. Others groan and murmur about shipping and romance. Headcase turns as the screen loads the search "Before you all lose your minds I have to warn that I prefer stories surrounding platonic soulmates so it won't *all* be about romance." A lot of those gathered breathe a sigh of relief at that.

"As much as I *adore* young love, I understand the draw of a good strong friendship." Midnight informs.

Aizawa sighs again and asks "So what stories do you have set up for us?"

"I have a few set aside, to start with is 'paint me in trust', a world where on first skin-to-skin contact soulmates leave their soul-colors on each other."

"I guess handshakes are a pretty common time to find out." Ashido comments.

"With how friendly our class is most of us are probably walking rainbows." Kaminari adds.

"That'd be a sight with the less social people." Sero ponders.

"I also have 'where flowers bloom', where romantic flower buds appear on one arm and platonic buds on the other."

"That's so cute!" Hagakure cheers.

"When you factor in gender, orientation, and preferences subject to change between these worlds the possibilities should be quite fascinating." Momo adds on.

Meanwhile Toga is harassing her boys with "What if a hero and villain are soulmates? How would they handle that? How would *we* handle that?"

"With awkwardness and violence." Dabi deadpans.

"Or kidnapping." Twice comments "*Betrayal!*"

"Denial." Shigiraki guesses "Definitely denial."

"And you won't tell us what means platonic or romantic until the story does will you?" Izuku asks.

"Right you are Midoriya." She answers.

"If that's the case then let's all take our seats so we can begin." Nedzu commands

As the theater settles the first story behind to play.

Now Playing

paint me in trust

paint me in trust

Chapter Summary

A little bit of green

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

paint me in trust

Part 1

{The first mark Izuku gets is a slight brush of green across his temple. It's the soft touch of a mother holding her son for the first time. Inko has one to match, the same shade of green staining the tips of her fingers. Hers is more noticeable; Izuku's tends to blend into his hairline. }

"Aww, that's so cute." Hagakure coos.

{He loves it anyways. He has to. It's the only soulmate mark he has.}

"What?" Uraraka says confused.

"That can't be right." Todoroki comments.

{(But not the only one he receives. There was once another, one that Izuku himself doesn't remember, but it's in all of his baby photos. A bright splash of dragon's breath red across Izuku's little hand. He tries to imagine when it happened, how his father must've leaned over the hospital bed and smiled as he held his son's hand for the first time. Kinda hard, when he doesn't remember what his father looks like.

Hisashi left when Izuku was two, and he took Izuku's second soulmate mark with him.)}

"Deadbeat dick." Jiro grumbles.

"His loss." Momo comforts.

{(And there's one more: a light dusting of soot black across his knuckles, from where his hand brushed against Kacchan's when he handed him an All Might figurine. How excited they'd been when that happened. How quickly it had disappeared, when Izuku told Kacchan he's Quirkless.) }

"Seriously dude that's so shallow." Kaminari chides.

"The nerd's annoying enough as is, don't come at me for this." Bakugo deflects.

{Izuku wants to be happy with the one he has, he really does. But everyone around him, even his mother, has rainbows painted across their skin.

And Izuku? He's colorless.

Unloved.

Worthless.

He stares at his blank skin, and he wishes.}

"This hurts my heart so much." Hagakure whines.

"The guy is so kind it's hard to believe he only has his mother to count on." Ojirou complains.

"Just because he doesn't have a quirk, doesn't make him any less." Sato adds.

{The other kids won't touch him.

No one wants to be soulmates with the Quirkless kid, they say. Izuku doesn't bother to point out that it wouldn't matter if they touched him anyways. These are marks of love, and none of them love him. }

"The cruelty of children is truly unrivaled." Tokoyami sighs.

{It's some sort of game to them. They figure out ways to hurt him without touching his skin. They throw his books in the trash, and his shoes into the toilet when he's not looking. They wrap their fists in their jackets before punching him. Sometimes, they'll play

nice, pretend to be friendly for a day, and then they lean in and reach to touch him and Izuku gets so excited, so hopeful before they laugh in his face and run away. Izuku only falls for that one a couple of times before he stops hoping. }

"What is wrong with these kids?" Mic complains.

"Those aren't children they're crotch goblins." Aizawa grumbles.

"I'd hate to agree but I do." Midnight adds.

{The only one who doesn't participate is Bakugou. He's not afraid to touch Izuku because he already has, and they're not soulmates. Not anymore. He leaves different kinds of marks instead, scrapes and bruises, and burns in the shape of stars. }

"What the fuck!?" Bakugo shouts.

"Chill Bakubro," Kirishima comforts "That isn't you, remember what Headcase said."

{(Izuku doesn't bother pointing out that Bakugou barely has more soul marks than him. For some reason, it doesn't matter to the others. What is a weakness on Izuku is a strength on Bakugou, apparently.)}

"This is about what I expected." Izuku comments.

{He takes to wearing long sleeves, even when it's hot, in the hopes that maybe if they don't constantly get reminded of Izuku's bare skin, they'll forget about it. (In the hopes that maybe he'll forget about it too, if only for a moment.)

It doesn't work.}

"Good lord, for a story based on love this is really depressing." Dabi huffs.

"And what do you know about love?" Shigiraki snarks.

"Fair enough." Dabi replies unfazed.

{Sometimes, Izuku likes to pretend.

When his mom is busy at work or preparing dinner, he hides in his room and takes out his markers. He closes his eyes and picks a

color at random. Not green, because he already has one like that. But once the marker is in his hand, Izuku rolls up his sleeves and lets the tip glide over his skin, and he imagines who would leave that mark. What they would look like. What their name would be? What it would be like to be loved by more than one person. }

"Damnit, other me better meet him." Uraraka demands "I refuse to see my friend suffer like this forever."

{When reality comes crashing down around him again, Izuku goes to the bathroom and scrubs his skin until all of the colors are gone again, and he pretends not to feel the tears stinging at his eyes. }

Tears flow freely for some, are restrained for others, and those with dry eyes still recognize the pain before them.

{His mother finds out. She always does.

It happens on a particularly bad day when Bakugou was just this side of too rough and his shoulder is burning and aching. The pain distracts him from the clock and makes him lose track of time. He doesn't notice when she gets home, not until she's knocking softly and opening his door.

Izuku moves as quickly as he can, sweeping the markers under the bed and hastily pulling his sleeves down. But the damage has already been done. Inko stands in the doorway, eyes wide and hand over her mouth, before she breaks down into tears, Izuku following close behind. }

Sobs are common in the theater at this point. No child, no *person* deserves to feel so thoroughly unloved.

{In moments, she crosses the room and pulls him into her arms, rocking him back and forth. Her fingertips brush over his temple, again and again, as if to remind him that that one is real.

(Inko doesn't try to reassure him. She doesn't tell him he'll get more eventually. She doesn't tell him that one day his skin will be a canvas for love. She's never been able to lie to her son.)}

"It will, you will!" Uraraka cries out " When you make it to UA, and I know you will, *we will love you*!" She hugs onto Izuku who is silent, staring blankly at the screen.

{And then he turns fourteen, and everything changes.}

The screen fades out and the theater **riots**.

"How could you?!"
"Don't do this!"
"You can't end it here!"
"Please!"
"What happens when he's fourteen!?"

"Hush now, we'll come back to this story soon, but for now it's time to move on." Headcase calms.

Reluctantly the groups quiet and sit in anticipation.

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

ADHD Brain: It's too long!
What do?
Break down?
Where first break?
After hurt/Before comfort?
Evil cackles

where flowers bloom Chapter 1

Chapter Summary

little buds

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

Now Playing

where flowers bloom

Chapter 1: Prologue

{Izuku hated flowers.

He didn't always hate them, of course. In fact, one of his earliest happy memories was of flowers, before they'd been tainted by his hatred of them. He remembered a conversation with his mother, even before he'd been diagnosed quirkless.}

"I know Headcase said quirks can change between worlds, but both these worlds have you quirkless." Uraraka comments concerned.

"Probably more dramatic this way." Izuku deflects carefully.

{"Mama," He'd said, gently holding her hand, "You have a flower!"

"That's right!" Inko had smiled, holding out her wrist for him to see. There, adorning what looked like a tattoo of vines, was a vibrant freesia flower. Izuku didn't know its name but Inko would tell him one day. "That's my special flower just for your papa!"

"Special flower?" Izuku asked, tilting his head. He was still little, just learning to speak in full sentences. Inko just nodded, bopping his nose with her finger.}

"D'awww." Hagakure coos "He's so *cute*."

{"That's right! A special flower. You'll get one too when you're a

little older, baby. Everybody has one. These flowers mean you have a soulmate!" She said a bright smile on her face. Izuku's eyes went wide with wonder, hearing his mother describe the concept of soulmates to him. He'd never heard of such a thing before, and it was exciting.

Izuku learned that around the time quirks came in, people also developed two thin bands of tattoo-like flower buds. On the left wrist, romantic flowers bloomed, and on the right, platonic and familial. One bud represented each soulmate, and the bud would bloom when you met the person it represented. Izuku thought that was nearly as cool as heroes.}

"So it's not just friends but found family on the platonic side." Todoroki begins to theorize.

"I'm a sucker for found family stuff." Izuku confirms.

{Izuku's mama just had one on her left wrist, a delicate white freesia flower that represented his papa. And on his mama's right wrist, she had an unbloomed bud and two fully-bloomed flowers, one for Auntie Mitsuki and one for Uncle Masaru. No wonder she was best friends with them, Izuku thought!}

"Aren't those your parents' names?" Sero asks Bakugo.

"Unfortunately." He grumbles in return.

{Izuku loved his mama's flowers, and he looked at them longingly, wondering what his would be like. He had hoped his flowers were as pretty as his mama's. If only he knew he'd grow to hate them in only a few years' time.}

"Jeez this kid is angsty." Dabi huffs.

{Izuku's soul marks appeared in the middle of daycare. Kacchan's had appeared only a few days earlier, and the other boy had been parading them around proudly. Izuku thought they were so cool! Just like everything Kachan did, really. Kachan had one little bud on his romantic side and five on his platonic side! Izuku had never seen *five* before! That was so cool.}

"That's totally gonna be us!" Kaminari cheers.

"Well duh! What would blasty do without us?" Ashido asks

confidently.

"Have one god damned day of peace that's what I'd do!" Bakugo shot back.

"Keep telling yourself that man." Sero responds.

{Kachan said his soulmates would be the best, the coolest of the cool. Izuku agreed, of course, because anybody around Kachan would be cool by association.

Izuku had been coloring in an All Might coloring book, listening to Kachan talk about one of his flowers. Apparently, his parents had taken him to a specialist, so now he knew what flower each of his buds were. His romantic one was a peony, Kachan had said. It was peaceful and routine, talking to Kachan like that, when suddenly Izuku's wrists started itching.

He scratched absentmindedly at them, and then he realized the itching wasn't going away. He looked down, and his eyes went wide as saucers. Right before his eyes, his soul marks were appearing! He gasped as he watched the marks form.

It started out on his left wrist and then spread to his right, the vines slowly meandering their way down his arms. The vines on his left circled once, but the vines on his right circled twice, wrapping around like bracelets. He couldn't believe it! By the time it was done, there were… there were so many buds on them! He ran up to the teacher and tugged on her long skirt.}

"What?! No! Show us how many!" Ashido demands.

{"Miss! Miss, look! My special flowers! I have lots of them!" He said, holding his arms out to see. The teacher gently examined his wrists, gasping when she saw all of the buds that had appeared on them.

"My goodness! You *do* have a lot! I've never seen so many! Well, Midoriya, that just means you'll have a lot of people who love you!" She smiled, patting his head. "Why don't you go show your friends?"}

"It's not gonna show us!" Hagakure cries.

{"Yeah!" Izuku's eyes sparkled. He ran over to Kachan quickly. "Kachan, look, look! My flowers came too! Lots of them!"

Immediately, the blond grabbed his wrists and studied them with the scrutinizing eyes only a child could have. When he was done, he just huffed. “Hmph. Mine are cooler. Just cause you have more doesn’t mean…” Kachan stopped speaking in the middle of his sentence.

Izuku was about to ask what was wrong, but then he saw it.

One of the flowers on his right wrist was blooming already. Izuku’s eyes sparkled with awe, especially when he saw a matching flower bloom on Kacchan’s wrist. A bright pink hollyhock flower marked them both as platonic soulmates. Izuku was Kacchan’s soulmate.}

"This is gonna go like the last story isn't it?" Kirishima wonders worriedly.

Bakugo suppresses a flinch "Watch it and figure it out yourself!" He snaps defensively.

{*Izuku* was *Kacchan’s* soulmate! Izuku’s smile was like a million watts.

“Kachan! We’re soulmates!” Izuku laughed happily, tugging the blond into a tight hug. Kachan just pushed him away roughly, but he was definitely smiling.

“Of course we are. I’m gonna be the number one and you’re gonna be my sidekick!” Kachan declared, looking perfectly assured of himself. Izuku just nodded fervently, completely in agreement. That sounded awesome!

“Yeah, Kachan! We’ll be the best heroes together!”

That sentiment didn’t even last a year.}

"Damn dude," Kaminari starts "You really started out this way, didn't you?"

All Bakugo can really do at this point is growl at him.

{“I’m sorry, but you should give it up.”

The callous words of a single doctor tore apart Izuku’s dream of heroics. In fact, it tore apart his entire idea of any kind of life. Because as he would learn growing up, the quirkless were less

than human in the eyes of everybody else. His own mother, though she loved him dearly, could only cry and whisper that she was sorry when he asked if he could still be a hero.}

"If anyone could make it quirkless It'd probably be the Problem child." Aizawa huffs annoyed.

{It hurt more than Izuku could imagine, especially when he told Kacchan. Kacchan looked sad for just a second before it turned to anger, and suddenly Izuku had found himself being pushed down. The next day, his name had turned to Deku.}

"Why did he call you Deku in this world anyway?" Uraraka asked concerned the nickname was worse than she thought.

"Because I kept hurting myself, that's all." Izuku said smoothly, he'd thought a question like this would come up eventually, so the practiced response came out sounding completely honest.

{A week after that, nobody would play with him anymore. The teachers sat him in the corner with ‘special work’ for him and told him it was too dangerous for him to play with the quirked kids. The teacher looked like she was sad for him, nothing like the happiness she’d shown on the day he’d gotten his soul marks.

Izuku’s only solace was those little flowers. He would trace them with tiny fingers and whisper to them, grateful they existed. He hoped his soulmates knew he loved them even from very far away. Even if Kacchan didn’t seem to want his love…

But then one day, even the flowers failed him.}

"Oh no," Hagakure whined in distress "is the flower gonna wilt or something?"

"That's what I'd guess." Ojirou sighs solemnly.

{Izuku started to hate flowers in junior high school.

His bright pink hollyhock had been fading in color, looking increasingly as if it were in desperate need of water. Izuku knew what it meant, and he didn’t want to think about it much. Instead, he put it out of his mind and tried to be the best soulmate to Kacchan that he could be, even in his quirkless state. Surely, that would get the flower back again!}

"That is so totally not cute." Toga whines quietly.

"You can't just force someone to love you." Dabi grits out bitterly.

{He learned analysis so he could help Kacchan improve, but Kacchan said he didn't need a Deku's help. He tried to be quiet and dutiful, but Kacchan said that he'd be a bother so long as a quirkless Deku existed around him. Nothing he ever did seemed to be right. Moreover, it seemed as if even being near Kacchan made the blond unhappy.

In his first year of junior high, the cruel words turned to physical cruelty for the first time. "Nobody would want a quirkless soulmate, and I certainly don't!" Kacchan had said. Then, he popped a hot hand over Izuku's shoulder, burning his uniform. "Get it through your head!"

Izuku felt a part of himself die, and by the time Kacchan had left, Izuku noticed that the hollyhock flower had completely withered.

Kacchan had rejected the bond and killed the flower.}

Jiro growled at the screen "I saw it coming but still Bakugo's such a dick."

"We just have to hold out hope that He'll find his people." Momo comforts "He does have *two* rings of flowers on his platonic side after all."

"We're cheering for you." Hagakure says toward the screen.

{His flower died just like his dreams the day the doctor had told him he was quirkless. If even his soulmates weren't assured, then what did he have to look forward to? Kacchan was right. Nobody could love or want a quirkless soulmate. All of his flowers would wither as quickly as they bloomed once they learned he was quirkless. He should feel grateful Kacchan had stuck around for even that long, really, shouldn't he?}

"No!"
"You deserve better!"
"We won't do that to you!"
"Don't give up yet!"
"You'll find them and it'll be great!"

{Izuku learned that day that he'd be all alone, a quirkless nobody.

But his heart couldn't take it, so he foolishly clung to the hope that one day… one day, he'd be able to become a hero. He had to believe in *something,* or he didn't think he'd make it through to the end of even that one school year.

He had to be a hero, even if he couldn't have soulmates. *He had to.*

Izuku hated flowers, so being a hero was all he had left.}

As the screen faded little discussions among the group pertaining to who they think would be their soulmates in this world would be can be heard. The shippers among them tease their closest friends as they settle in for the next story.

Now playing

paint me in trust part 2

Chapter Summary

A splash of color

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

paint me in trust pt.2

{It doesn't happen the first time they meet. When Izuku grabs onto All Might's leg, there's cloth separating his palm from the hero's skin, and that's the only time they actually touch for a little while. So it doesn't happen the first time they meet, or the second, or the third.

Then, two months into their training on Dagobah Beach, Izuku trips over a pipe.}

"Training on Dagobah?" Aizawa asks.

"Okay I admit I may have met Young Midoriya before the entrance exam," All Might concedes "about ten months before to be exact."

"And a personal relationship with a student would put said student in danger." Nedzu cuts off an argument that was about to begin.

{All Might, even in his weakened form, has great reflexes. He reaches out with one hand and catches Izuku around the wrist, pulling him up before he can fall. And when he pulls his hand back, there's a ring of gold stretching all the way around Izuku's wrist, like a big bracelet. }

"I Knew it!" cheered the entirety of the Dekusquad each with their own level of smiles.

{For a second, Izuku thinks that maybe All Might had some sort of stain on his hand, something he transferred to him. He goes to wipe at it, but then he sees All Might staring at his own hand,

palm up.

It’s green.

Green, like Izuku’s hair.

Green, like Izuku’s eyes.

Green, like the mark Izuku left on his mother.}

"It's a beautiful shade of green." Yagi mumbles proudly.

{“Well, then,” All Might laughs awkwardly. “That’s...interesting.”

Izuku doesn’t know what to say. He’s never experienced anything like this before—are they supposed to talk about it? Do they just continue on like it didn’t happen? He doesn’t know, and the only word that comes out of his mouth when he opens it is “sorry.” }

"I blame Bakugo for this." Sato mentions.

{“What are you apologizing for?” All Might cocks his head to the side. There’s a soft smile on his face that Izuku doesn’t know how to interpret. “I thought this might happen. My mentor and I shared marks as well.” His expression turns to something more thoughtful, more understanding. “But it doesn’t have to mean anything yet if you don’t want it to, my b—young Midoriya.”}

"Not mean anything?" Izuku asks absolutely scandalized.

{Doesn’t have to mean anything? Of course, it means something. All Might, his childhood hero, is his *soulmate*. All Might loves him, or will love him. Izuku starts to speak but—

(Colorless. Unloved. Worthless.)}

"The poor thing." Midnight says in disappointment.

{This must be a mistake. A fluke on the universe’s part. All Might will realize that, in a few days, and then the mark will disappear, just like his father’s, just like Bakugou’s. Izuku can tell him that now, keep him from wasting any time, but…

But Izuku has spent years staring at his unmarked skin, wishing and hoping, and now there is gold coating his wrist, and he can’t bring himself to give it up so soon, no matter how selfish that may be.

"Okay," he says. }

"Wanting to be loved isn't selfish." Uraraka says firmly toward the screen.

{When Izuku gets home that night, Inko sees his wrist right away. The dishes she's holding in the air with her Quirk crash into the sink, causing soapy water to splatter against the wall.

"Oh," she breathes, eyes wide and shiny as he approaches, holding his wrist gingerly like he used to when Bakugou pushed him. She gently takes his hand, studying the mark like it's something precious, running her fingers over it like she can't believe it's real. Then she pulls Izuku into a hug so fierce he thinks it might actually suffocate him.}

"Damnit." Izuku whispers as he tears up.

{But she doesn't ask him who it's from. He's grateful for that.}

"That'd be an awkward conversation." Kaminari comments.

"I'll say." Ashido responds.

{Then there's Uraraka.

She almost touches him. Almost. After she keeps him from falling with her Quirk, she helps pull him upright by the wrist. If he hadn't been wearing long sleeves, they would have touched skin-to-skin. }

"I better be one of his soulmates!" Uraraka shouts in determination.

{Irrationally, even though he knows next to nothing about this girl, he wishes they had.

But then she walks away, and the moment has passed. Izuku can still feel the warmth of her hand through his sleeve, though, and he lets the feeling carry him through the test, lets it carry his feet right back to her, lets it carry him through the air and then back down again as he falls—}

"Oh shit, is he gonna be okay?" All those who weren't in his exam stadium started to panic.

{She touches him.

It's more like a slap than a touch, actually, but beneath the stinging pain is a familiar warmth, the sensation of something slotting into place. }

Bakugo starts to cackle and at first, everyone turns on him until he says "This fuckers is gonna have a handprint right across his fucking *face*!" causing people to jolt before joining him in laughter.

{Izuku's arm and legs are broken, and there are mere seconds left to get even one point so he can follow in All Might's footsteps, but all he can think about is how much he wants to see the mark she left on him.

"Oh!" Uraraka says after she releases him, as she catches a glimpse of the green on her fingertips. "Wow! Would you look at that? I think we're—"

The timer buzzes.

He passes out.}

Uraraka is so excited she's doing a celebratory dance much to the amusement of her friends.

{Luckily for Izuku, the universe did not leave him with a huge handprint across his face. It did, however, leave him with five pink fingerprints splayed over his cheekbone, matching the pads on Uraraka's fingers.}

"Awwww, that so *cute*" Ashido coos as Bakugo huffs.

{They're the prettiest things he's ever seen.

He sits on the infirmary bed, waiting for Recovery Girl to come back with the x-ray scans to confirm his broken bones are healed, and he runs his fingers over the new marks over and over. The highest of them is a bare inch from his mother's mark, and there's something about the contrast between the light pink and the dark green that pleases him.}

"It does look *absolutely* adorable." Uraraka grins as Izuku blushes.

{Staring at the mirror on the wall, Izuku holds up his golden wrist to his pink cheek and his green temple, and the resulting smile is

so wide that his eyes tear up a bit.

(Maybe it's not a fluke. Maybe he's lovable after all.)}

"Of course you are!"
"Finally he's getting it!"
"This is just the beginning!"

{Which, of course, is exactly when Recovery Girl decides to walk in.

He immediately hides his hand behind his back, cheeks blushing bright red like he's been caught doing something he wasn't supposed to. Recovery Girl laughs, waddling over to the bed with scans that are nearly as tall as her.

"It's a shame, you know," she says, and Izuku's heart tightens and braces, "that all of the students who were here for the entrance exam have already left."}

"We didn't exchange phone numbers!?" Uraraka cries out in horror.

{"Oh," Izuku says, shocked. He hasn't even thought about that. How is he supposed to get in contact with her again? That can't be it, right? They left soul marks on each other, there's no way they won't meet again.

And then Izuku remembers his total score of *nothing*. Maybe that is it, then.}

"He doesn't know about rescue points~" Ashido teases cheerfully.

{(Will her mark fade too? How long will it take for the pink to disappear like it was never there at all?)

"I wouldn't worry too much about it, Sonny." Recovery Girl turns back to him, a reassuring smile on her face. Her lips are a bright, harsh yellow that Izuku thought was lipstick, but now he wonders. "I have a feeling you'll see her again."}

This time it's Izuku who starts laughing, *loudly*.

"Young Midoriya this isn't funny!" All Might calls out.

"I'm sorry," Izuku says between bouts of laughter "but it is."

"You know dearie," Recovery Girl interrupts "with how many people I

meet after an injury it's a wonder my lips are a solid color; you should be honored." she smirks playfully, the rest of the theater having caught on suppressing their own laughing. All Might can only grumble in response.

{For whatever reason, he believes her. Maybe it’s just desperation, but he clings to the hope. “Thanks,” he says.

“You’re welcome. Now, let’s take a look at these scans…”}

{He gets into UA.

He knows it’s not possible, that you only feel something from your soul marks when your soulmate is touching them, but Izuku swears, when the hologram is done playing, all three of his marks radiate warmth.}

The people relax in the warmth of this happier part of the story. Quietly waiting for the next story. Slowly tensing as they remember the sad start each of these tales has had.

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

Next Time: A study in stupidity
Staring the Number One Hero: All Might

where flowers bloom Chapter 2

Chapter Summary

Kacchan was right. None of his soulmates would want him.

Chapter Notes

{on screen}

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now Playing

where flowers bloom

Origins

{Izuku looked up to the train tracks above Tatooine station, eyes wide as he watched the villain rampage. He had an awestruck look on his face as he sprinted forward, eager to catch a glimpse of the hero fight he had no doubts would ensue.}

“Really Midoriya?” Iida asks.

“I don’t do that anymore.” Midoriya defends.

“Now you join in.” Ururaka chuckles.

“I have a license.” Midoriya points out.

“*Provisional* licence Midoriya.” Iida reminds his friend.

{“Wow! Such a huge villain!” He marveled hands clutched tight around his notebook. Musutafu was a known hero hotspot, and he was always catching fights on his way to and from school. It let him take notes on all kinds of fighting styles and heroes, and he felt knowledgeable on all the heroes regular to the town, and plenty more that weren’t. Seeing their styles up close always allowed him a better advantage in analyzing them, though.}

“Analyzing?” Nedzu asks curiously.

{He watched as the villain broke an electric tower, and it toppled,

nearly onto the crowd of onlookers. Before it could hit anybody, however, Death Arms had swooped onto the scene to catch it and Backdraft had arrived for crowd control.}

“Phew.” Hagakure sighs.

{“Death Arms! Backdraft! And is that… Kamui Woods arriving on-scene?!” It was a fanboy’s dream, watching so many heroes at once. A man in the crowd with star-like growths on his head heard his excited voice, laughing as he watched the fight alongside Izuku.}

“Fanboys’ are fun.” Mic comments.

{“I know that look! You’re a hero fanboy, huh?” The man asked. Izuku flushed, a little embarrassed to have been paid attention to.}

“How cute, kero.” Tsu teases.

”Tsu.” Izuku whines.

{“Y-Yeah!” He nodded, flipping to a page in his notebook. He began to make notes after Mt. Lady swooped in to take the credit and camera time, absolutely enthralled by a new hero. He began to mutter to himself, his pen scribbling furiously across the page. The man beside him grinned.

“What’s that, taking notes? You want to be a hero, huh?” He asked. Izuku nodded again.}

“You think so?” Jiro asks sarcastically.

{“More than anything else in the whole world!” Izuku said, almost a little breathless, talking about his dream. It was all he had left, so he had to cling to it with all he had. The man seemed to take note of Izuku’s hands, then - specifically, the bands around his wrists that peeked out from the long sleeves of his gakuran.}

“I want to know how many flowers he has.” Ashido whines.

{“Wow! You sure have a bunch of soulmates! You know, they say that having a lot of soulmates is a sign you’ll be somebody important one day. Of course, that could just be an old wive’s tale… but I say go for it, kid! Who knows, maybe I’ll be your first fan when you hit the scene!” The man laughed good-naturedly,

and Izuku felt warmed by the statement.

Even if the other man didn't know that he was quirkless, didn't know that even if he had soulmates they'd never want him, it was still a nice comment anyway. Maybe the man would be his first fan someday if he ever achieved his dream.}

*"When."*Ururaka insists.

{"Thank you," Izuku said shyly, covering the withered flower on his right wrist shyly, hoping the man hadn't seen it. There was a stigma against withered soul flowers, but wearing a cover outside of being a hero was as good as saying you had one anyway. "That means a lot, I hope you're right!"}

"Aren't there people who would rather keep it private?" Koda asks quietly.

{Izuku went to school that morning feeling better than he had in a while. He'd gotten to see Mt. Lady debut, he saw a cool hero fight, and he got some nice words of encouragement. He wished every day could be that nice.}

Izuku laughed nervously.

{"So, it's time to start seriously thinking about your futures aside from soulmates. I know everyone wants to meet theirs, but you'll just have to wait until those flowers bloom. You can take steps for your careers, though. I could pass out those career aptitude tests…" Izuku's teacher mused at the front of the classroom, holding a pile of papers in his hands.

"But who cares about those, I know you all want to go down the hero track!" The man laughed, throwing his head back. The class cheered with him, but Izuku just sunk his head lower, focusing on his notes. Speaking up or standing out was bad. He couldn't make himself known, attention always brought awful things with it…}

"How many red flags can you put in a single speech?" Midnight remarks.

{"Don't lump me in with all of these extras, teach!" Kacchan - Bakugou, Izuku corrected his own thoughts. Bakugou didn't like being called Kacchan - barked at their teacher, his feet up lazily on the desk. Izuku pursed his lips and made sure to avoid the

blond's gaze. "These losers will be lucky to end up as sidekicks to some ancient D-List hero!"}

"Dude." Sero scolds.

"He's not wrong." Bakugo says.

"Doesn't mean you should say it." Sero continues.

{"Of course, you're aiming for U.A., aren't you Bakugou?" Their teacher smiled, probably thinking of how he could claim he was Bakugou's teacher one day when the other boy made it big. The teachers at Aldera praised him to no end, making sure he always got his way and never got punished for a thing, lest they damage the record of somebody with a powerful quirk.}

"Look at all those red flags." Midnight remarks.

{"I aced all the mock exams and I'm the only one with a chance in hell of getting in there! I'll be more popular than All Might himself, and it all starts with U.A High!" Bakugou grinned wolfishly, palms flexing and smoking as he declared such a thing. Izuku watched the flowers peek out from his sleeves as he did. Bakugou had no problems showing off his withered soulflower as if he was proud to cast Izuku out of his life...}

"Hey, can I...?" Ururaka starts.

"No." Headcase tells her "You can't go to the other worlds."

{"Oh… it looks like Midoriya wants to go to U.A. as well." The teacher's expression turned sour like he'd drunk something rancid. The classroom went deadly silent as the eyes of everyone turned on him in an instant. Izuku felt so small just then, especially when Bakugou's apoplectic snarl turned to stare him down. He swallowed thickly, the bundle of nerves in his throat preventing him from speaking. He knew it would be better if he didn't speak anyway.}

"Asshole." Dark Shadow whispers, Tokoyami doesn't bother trying to stop her.

{"You?!" Bakugou growled, slamming his palms on Izuku's desk and setting off small explosions on it. What were two more scorch marks, anyway? It was already covered in them. "You're even worse than these extras, you fucking quirkless loser! You really

think U.A. would take somebody whose soulmates don't even want them, let alone a quirkless person, Deku?!"}

"Excuse me!?"
"What the fuck!?"
"Who do you think you are!?"

{Izuku had nothing to say to that. He couldn't. He could feel the eyes on him, knowing that if he said one thing out of line…

Well, it wouldn't be pretty.}

"You're sure I can't...?" Ururaka asks again.

"No." Headcase states.

{Elsewhere, a thin, blond man looked down at the bands on his wrists. He had them covered, but he knew what was underneath them. His eyes moved down toward the grocery bags in his hands, wondering what his soulmate would like for dinner. They hadn't eaten together in a while, so it would be nice to have a meal…}

"Ooh~ All Might-Sensei's soulmates." Ashido starts teasing.

Bakugo pulls her back to her seat. "No."

{But his thoughts were interrupted by the appearance of a villain made of sludge, carrying money in his viscous body.

The blond man buffed up, tightened his grip on his grocery bags, and set a signature smile on his face. He was here.}

"He even *thinks* it." Hagakure giggles.

{Izuku sat in the classroom, waiting as all of the other students filed out. He always had to be the last one out. It made things easier in the long run, though more of a target at the same time since everyone knew he stayed behind… He was just finishing up some notes today, however, revision some theories and observations about Mt. Lady.}

"I'll need to ask about this at some point." Nedzu remarks.

Toshinori speaks up hoping to provide his successor a bit of a buffer "He is rather protective of them so I would suggest asking for a new

project over his personal collection.”

Nedzu’s tail flicks to the side “I could present it as extra credit to the entire hero course.”

Aizawa sigh giving All Might a withering look.

{As he finished up the last line and shut it, somebody grabbed the book from him. He looked up with wide eyes, upset because that was a brand-new notebook! It was the one he’d been fortunate enough to see a hero’s debut with…

But Bakugou was the one holding it, he realized. Getting it back was impossible.}

“How often does this happen?” Thirteen comments.

{“Don’t tell me you’re taking notes on how to be a hero!” One of Bakugou’s followers, the one with the stretchy fingers - Shigeru, Izuku thinks, he can’t quite remember - jeers at him. Another boy, Ryo - Izuku still isn’t sure, his classmates refuse to let him call them by name anyways, so why would he bother trying to remember - laughs alongside Fingers.}

“Fucker doesn’t deserve a name.” Bakugo scoffs.

{As par for the course, Bakugou blew the notebook up in his hands and immediately tossed it out the nearest window. All that work and those special notes… burnt to a crisp, landing who knows where. He fought down the urge to cry.}

“He tries.” Ojirou states.

{“I see you still don’t get it, you damn nerd.” Bakugou’s eyes narrowed dangerously. “I thought I told you a billion times by now: you’re quirkless. All of your soulmates will wither their flowers the second they realize it, just like me. U.A. won’t take somebody like you, and you’re going to ruin my perfect setup just by applying. So get it through your head already and don’t even think about applying. You got that, Deku?”}

Hound Dog starts growling.

{Izuku felt a retort building, but he swallowed that down too. He couldn’t say that being a hero was all he had because Bakugou had taken away his only other dream: having soulmates. Bakugou

proved firsthand that soulmates couldn't be relied on, and he knew from his entire life that nobody would want a quirkless soulmate.}

"Fucking Bullshit!" shrieks.

"Agree with the sentiment, disagree with the language." Iida comments.

{But U.A. had no rules against quirkless students. He could apply there. He could be a hero student if he tried hard enough. It was physically possible for him. There were no restrictions on soulmates, despite what Bakugou said, only societal taboos and stigmas.

What was one more stigma on top of quirklessness, anyway?}

"I think I just heard my heart crack." Hagakure comments.

{"You know, Deku, if you want to be a hero so bad, I have an idea." Bakugou said, his voice laced with sarcastic venom as he finally left. Seems he decided not to be so physical for once, and Izuku was immensely grateful. But then he spoke again, and Izuku would wish for anything else.

"Pray for a quirk in your next life and take a swan dive off of the roof. Maybe then you'll actually be somebody a soulmate would want."}

"What the fuck!?"
"How dare you!?"
"Some hero!"
"You fucking asshole!"

{Izuku felt suddenly sick to his stomach. In fact, he was sure he dissociated, because the next thing he realized he was standing outside of the koi pond outside the school. He could hardly process the fact Bakugou had said that to him.

One of his soulmates - withered flower or not - would be okay with him being dead.}

"I wouldn't." Bakugo says under his breath.

"What was that Bakubro?" Kirishima asks.

“Mind your own business.” Bakugo snaps with half the heat as usual.

{Bakugou didn’t care if he died. If he did, why the hell would he say that?

“Stupid fish. That’s not your food,” Izuku muttered, yanking his now waterlogged notebook from the koi pond. He angrily scrubbed tears from his eyes as he began his trek home. Never in his life did he think things would be like this.

He recalled his childhood then, trying to piece together a picture of his life in his mind.}

“Flashback!” Kaminari cheers.

{“Mama, mama!” A young Izuku bounced up and down excitedly in his chair. He clutched an All Might figure in one hand, waiting eagerly as his mother managed the website for him. “Video, please! Video please!”}

Coos sound out around the room much to Midoriya’s embarrassment.

{“Goodness, you sure do love this video, huh? I think you must’ve added all these views yourself! But it’s kind of scary for me…” His mother murmured, though Izuku paid no mind. When the video loaded, he grinned, big and wide, just like All Might.

The hero’s debut played, and Izuku laughed alongside him. He held up the figure, his soul marks on proud display. “I’m gonna be a hero, mama! Just like All Might!”}

“Yeah, you will!” Ururaka cheers.

{“Oh?” Inko smiled, a little amused. “Just like All Might?”

“Yeah! Then I can be strong and hug all of my soulmates at once! I’m gonna be a hero and protect them, mama! You’ll see!” He declared proudly, holding his wrists up someday show the world. “I love all of my soulmates, mama!”}

“So cute!”
“Ugh, the cavities.”
“Adorable.”

{“Well, I just know they’re going to love you too, Izuku. You’ll be

able to hug them all someday, I promise.”}

“I hope I’m one of them.” Todoroki says quietly earning a grin from Midoriya.

{Inko gently pushed the door to the computer room open. They’d just gotten home from that horrible doctor’s visit… Izuku had taken the news that he was quirkless so hard, and then he’d just gone and holed himself up in there. When she saw him, her heart lurched in her chest for her baby boy. Was this her fault, she wondered?}

“No dearie, it’s not your fault.” Recovery Girl comforts.

{He was swaddled in his favorite All Might blanket, clutching his favorite figure in shaky hands. Izuku was clearly crying, hiccups and sniffles coming from the other side of the chair as the video of All Might’s debut played on a loop.}

“I can only imagine.” Shoji comments.

{“Oh, Izuku…” She murmured, a hand to her mouth. The video paused, and the chair turned around. Izuku’s eyes were red from crying, and he was still crying more.

“Mama… c-can I… can I still protect my s-soulmates? Can I still b-be a hero? Even if I’m q-quirkless?” He asked, his little voice cracking. Inko let out a quiet sob and fell to her knees at her son’s side. She felt like this was her fault. Her fault he’d been born without the one thing he so desperately wanted to help fulfill his dream.

“I’m so sorry, Izuku. I’m so sorry… Your soulmates will still love you, no matter what, I promise…” She said, clutching her little boy in her arms. “I promise…”}

“That’s not... He could...” Aizawa sighs. “If anyone could pull off being a quirkless hero it’d be Problem Child.”

“Here’s hoping.” Mic agrees.

{The day Izuku’s first soul flower withered, he was absolutely beside himself. He couldn’t hide it from his mother, who was absolutely distraught. Her baby’s soul flower had withered. She

had never experienced a withering, but she'd heard it was one of the most emotionally painful experiences somebody could go through, and her baby boy…}

"A darkness unlike any other." Tokoyami rumbles.

{Izuku was in his room, trying to block out the sound of his mother's yelling over the phone. He didn't want her to, it would just make Kacchan mad at him, but… he knew better than to try and stop her when she was upset for him.}

"Good."

{"Mitsuki, don't even try to defend him! You know as well as I, my baby wouldn't have the heart to wither a soulflower! Soulmates were all he's ever wanted, and he just decided to reject the first bond he ever made?! Don't give me that!" Inko yelled into the phone in her hands. Izuku couldn't hear the other end of the conversation, but his mother sounded livid.}

"Rightfully so!" Iida agrees.

{"No! You're my platonic soulmate, Mitsuki, but if you can't take this as seriously as it deserves, then there might just be another withered soulflower in the Bakugou family!" There was silence. Izuku couldn't believe his mother had just said that. For his sake. A quirkless child… His mother was the only one who loved him. And then, "Yes, I'm serious! My husband and my son are worth the world to me. I'm sorry to say that if you can't admit to your son's part in this, then we have nothing more to speak about!"}

Midoriya gaped at the screen.

{There was silence again, and then a few minutes later, his teary-eyed mother walked into the room. She immediately went to hug Izuku tight, pressing her face into his shoulder. "I'm so sorry, baby. I know you didn't want to hear that. I just couldn't stand the thought… I know Mitsuki doesn't want to think her son's capable of something like that, but… we both know how the world's treated you. I'm so sorry."}

"Mom." Midoriya murmurs.

{And Izuku did. He knew how painful life was for the quirkless and their families. But this hurt so much more than being quirkless… the people that were supposed to love him no matter

what simply didn't have to.}

"No." Ururaka denies.

}They could reject the bond.}

"That doesn't mean they will." Ururaka insists.

"Ururaka." Midoriya tries to comfort her.

"No, if we're soulmates and she rejects you, I *will* find a way." Ururaka promises.

{And if Bakugou, the one who knew him from before he was quirkless, could reject him…? Then how could he hope for any of his other soulmates to want him in their lives either?}

"I will." Ururaka claims.

"Me too, kero." Tsu agrees.

"I as well." Iida adds.

"Yes." Todoroki deadpans.

"You guys." Midoriya tears up.

{At least he had his mother. And if he couldn't have his soulmates, then… he had to live for something. He couldn't just stop dreaming. He'd be a hero for his mother, who would sacrifice so much for him. His wonderful, kind, loving mother who would give up her own soulmates just for him. He'd be a hero so she could smile again.

That day, Izuku swore to himself he'd keep trying, no matter how much it hurt.}

"That's so bittersweet." Midnight comments.

{Izuku sighed, gently airing out the waterlogged pages the best he could. It was no use to think back on his life. He knew perfectly well how he got here. He was born quirkless, so… it was his lot in life. After his mother had called the Bakugous, things only got far worse for him.}

"What does *that* mean?" Toshinori growls.

{Bakugou hated his very existence. He'd told everyone that Izuku had been the one to break the bond because Izuku thought he was better than him… that Izuku thought Bakugou was so low he'd need a quirkless person as a soulmate.}

"What kind of bullshit is he spewing!?" Ururaka screeches.

{Everyone believed him, and the bullying got worse. It was taboo to break a soul bond, after all, so a quirkless person breaking the bond because he thought he was too good for Bakugou? Nobody could abide by that, so life got far, far worse. Auntie Mitsuki still hadn't come around on the thought that Bakugou had been the one to break the bond, either, so even his mom's soul flower had begun to wither. Uncle Masaru's hadn't, however - Inko had said that he quietly expressed regret for their situation and that he'd tried to talk some sense into Mitsuki, but it hadn't worked.}

"She believed *me*?" Bakugo asks incredulously.

"At least you acknowledge your asshole ways." Kaminari jokes.

Bakugo glares at him a moment before rolling his eyes and turning back to the screen.

{Izuku hated that he was causing a rift between his mother and Auntie Mitsuki, but at the same time, he was grateful he had at least a single person on his side.}

"This isn't your fault." Yaoyarozu sighs.

{He refused to even think about what Bakugou had said. He had to be a hero for his mother. He had to see her smile again. That wasn't even an option for him, no matter how much he hurt knowing that his life had no meaning to anybody but his mother.}

"That'll change real quick once we meet." Ururaka insists.

{That's right, he reminded himself as he walked home, he had to stay strong.

He came under an underpass, wondering how much of the notebook he could salvage. He was so focused on getting his mind off of the crushing defeat that he felt that he didn't even hear a manhole cover slide open, a thick, slimy sort of noise gurgling up from it.}

”That fucker!” Bakugo growls.

{Before he could react, he was being covered and his belongings were scattered across the ground. A villain made of some viscous fluid that smelled and tasted horrid made its way down his nose and throat, choking the air out of him.}

“Wasn’t All Might following this guy?” Ojirou asks.

“He is.” Hagakure agrees.

{“A nice meat suit to hide in! Don’t worry, it’ll only hurt for about 45 seconds…thanks, kid. You’re my hero, you know that?” The villain crowed, and Izuku felt some sick sense of irony. He was all alone out here, being choked by a villain calling him a hero. Maybe Bakugou was right…maybe he would be born with a quirk in his next life.}

“Don’t think like that!” Ururaka shouts the rest of the crew crowding closer to Midoriya to reassure themselves he’s still there.

{He couldn’t get a grip, and the man kept his vital organs like his eyes out of reaching distance from him. His entire body, aside from his face and hands, was suspended inside that fluid. He couldn’t do anything. He was stuck like this…was he really going to die?}

“NO!”
“Where the hell is All Might!”
“This can’t be happening!”

{And then Izuku heard his voice.

“Don’t be afraid, young man! Why?”

Izuku’s heart swelled with hope, even as he lost consciousness.

“Because I am here!”}

“Whoo!”
“All Might!”
“THANK FUCK!”

{When Izuku woke up, it was to a sharp smell and a gentle hand. He sat up with a lurch, gasping for air he suddenly had again. The hand stilled him, and a gentle voice was the next to speak up.

Izuku swore he knew that voice…

"Are you alright there, young man? I need to do a field exam. Make sure you don't need further medical attention. Open your mouth for me. Can you breathe alright? Any discomfort?" The voice asked.}

"Better than I would have thought." Recovery Girl comments.

"Uh... Thanks?" Yagi replies bewildered.

{_Izuku did as he was told, opening wide and squinting the light out of his eyes. When he saw who the voice belonged to, he nearly yelped.

All Might! All Might was standing right in front of him! He'd saved his life from that awful sludge villain, and now he was… shining a penlight in his mouth and eyes?}

"That is standard procedure isn't it?" Midoriya asks.

"It is," Iida informs "it is great to see a great hero setting a good example no matter how busy he may be."

"Or how close he is to deflating." Todoroki deadpans.

"Yes, that too." Iida agrees.

{"Ah, looks a little irritated. You should try gargling some disinfecting mouthwash and keep an eye out for infection, alright? You should also see a doctor, to see if any of that fluid made it into your lungs. Your pupils look good too, no concussion. Otherwise, you seem healthy." All Might said gently, offering a hand to help him stand up. Izuku took it, shaking with awe and disbelief.}

"Meltdown incoming!" someone warns.

{"I-I can breathe okay," he finally managed to choke out. "A-Ah, um, c-can I ask f-for an a-autograph, sir?!"}

"To no one's surprise..." Torino comments.

{"Ahaha, an All Might fan, are you? Not to worry, young man, I've left one in your notebook. I also gathered your things. I'm very sorry to have gotten you caught up in this, I was chasing this villain, and well, I took a wrong turn. I'm new to Musutafu, you

see. But it's alright now because I was here!" The man laughed, bright and beaming.}

"Health assessment before autographs." Recovery Girl scolds.

{Izuku felt so safe and inspired. All Might had gone out of his way to gather his things for him? Double-checked his health? Even given him an autograph? Izuku could see how he was the number one even better now, he was so much cooler in person…
"Th-Thank you so much, sir!" Izuku said, a little breathless as he flipped open his notebook to see a double-paged autograph. He'd treasure it for as long as he could! All Might nodded and began to stretch his legs, taking a deep breath.}

"And off he goes." Dabi jokes bored with the quote "lovey-dovey" shit.

{"Alright, then. I've got to go, so be safe, alright?" He said, giving a little wave. "I'm taking off, so be sure to stand back!"

Izuku blinked owlishly. He was leaving already? But… but he couldn't! All Might was right here! This was his chance to ask about heroics! He had to ask… And before he knew it, Izuku had clung to the man's leg, driven by equal parts desperation and instinct.}

"Raise of hands! Who's surprised?"
"Typical."
sigh

{"What in the-?!"All Might was startled, grabbing Izuku's arm and hefting him up into a tighter and safer grasp as they flew through the air. "Young man, that was incredibly dangerous! What if you had fallen?! You should know better than to interfere with things like this!"}

"Wait, has this not happened before?" Mic asks.

"No, of course not." Yagi answers "Why would you think it did?"

"People in shock do stupid stuff all the time." Mic points out.

{All Might landed on the roof of a nearby office building in downtown Musutafu, looking worried and exasperated. Izuku let go with a look of shame, knowing it was wrong of him. But he just had to ask…!}

“No, no you did not.” Midoriya denies.

{“I really do have to go now, young man. Do you need me to walk you downstairs or will you be fine by yourself?” All Might asked, straightening his shirt. Izuku opened his mouth to answer instinctively, but what came out was a question instead.

“How do I be a hero like you, All Might? I-I… I’m quirkless… but I… I just want to be a hero for my mother… to make her smile again, just like you make everyone smile…” Izuku said, clutching the hem of his shirt. “Please… do you even think it’s possible…?”}

Midoriya shrinks in his seat.

{“Young man-” All Might was cut off by a wet cough and a plume of smoke dissipating from his body. Izuku’s eyes went as wide as saucers, watching as All Might turned from the form he knew to a thin, gaunt one. Izuku couldn’t even find it in him to scream, he was so surprised. He just stood there in shock with his jaw dropped. “Shit. Ah, I’m sorry you had to see this, young man. You cannot speak of this to anybody, alright?”}

Shigaraki glances up from his phone game “Who the hell would believe him?”

{“A-Are you really All Might…?” Izuku finally managed to get out. The man sighed.

“Yes, I am All Might. This form is the one I take when I’m not actively using my quirk. It enhances my form as well as my strength. Do you understand why you cannot speak about this, now? This is my personal identity. You must keep this to yourself.” He said sternly. Izuku nodded quickly, of course, he would! Besides, it’s not like anybody would ever actually listen to him.}

“Oof.”
“That’s not...”
“I guess?”

{“Of course, sir…!”

“With that being said… look here, young man.” All Might gently lifted the hem of his shirt, revealing a gnarled, flower-like scar that twisted itself across half of his abdomen.}

gasp
“Oh, my god.”
“*That’s* why he’s like that?

{_“See this? I got this in an untelevised villain fight five years ago. It destroyed my stomach and one of my lungs. It’s reduced my capacity to do hero work down to only three hours in a day, and I’ve just run out.”}

“And he kept working?” Yaoyarozu questions.

{Izuku felt like he’d lost one of *his* lungs just listening to the man say that. He knew All Might’s appearances had been getting less and less frequent, but this…?}

“Most hadn’t even noticed.” Yagi smiles sadly.

{“These kinds of injuries are a risk for every hero, even ones as powerful as me.” He said, dropping his shirt back down. “It’s a dangerous profession, hard enough for even those with quirks to get into. I think it’s possible to make your mother smile in many ways… but perhaps being a hero might not be the safest route. You should consider routes like the police or EMTs. They’re just as valuable, unsung heroes of our profession.”}

“NO!” Ururaka shrieks “You’re our number one you’re supposed to say we can do it!”

{Izuku’s heart felt like it was breaking all over again, hurting just as bad as it had when Bakugou had rejected their soul bond. He knew exactly what All Might was implying.}

“He’s wrong.” Todoroki states firmly.

{“So without a quirk, I think it’ll be hard for you. I’m sorry to say so, but that’s the plain reality of the world we live in. Now, if you’ll excuse me.” All Might dipped his head and took his leave, heading down the stairs of the building they were on top of.}

“Don’t leave him on the roof!” Jiro yells. “He was told to jump off one today!”

“Shit!”
“Nonononononononono!”
“Deku!”

{Izuku couldn't hear a thing except for the wind rushing around his ears, the blood rushing in his head. His idol… All Might had…}

Midori ya couldn't look at the screen.

{All Might had gently told him that being a hero wasn't in his cards. He was nice about it, but… Izuku knew from experience what platitudes like that meant. It felt like his chest was being torn in two, and as he looked down, he saw that his hands were trembling, the skin itching along his right wrist. With wet eyes, he looked at where it was itching and felt sick.}

"No." Yagi whispers in muted horror.

{One of the flowers had bloomed. A cluster of tiny, blue blossoms made up one flower… one of his soul flowers. A choked sob left him, and he clutched a shaky hand over the flower. All Might himself was one of his soulmates. Familial probably… When he was little, that would have been his biggest dream, finding out that All Might had a spot as one of his flowers.}

"No." Yagi said a little louder.

{But now it just left a massive, painfully empty hole in his chest. Because one of his flowers would bloom for All Might, and Kacchan was right. None of his soulmates would want him. All Might had told him that it was simply reality.}

"That's not what he said!"
"He's wrong!"
"NO!"

{And Izuku watched in real-time as the flower began to wilt and wither, this time of his own accord. He'd just wither it before All Might could, and get it over with.}

"NO!"

{At least this time, he'd have some control for once in his life.}

"Don't do it!"
"Please!"
"It'll be okay!"
"Nonono!"
"He can't!"

“All Might!”
“What was he thinking!?”

“Everyone please!” Headcase calls for the groups' attention. “I know this is hard and we’ll come back to it soon. We just need to watch some of paint me in trust. You still want to see that right?”

Between sniffles and shifting the crowd agrees to move on hoping for happier days.

Now Playing

Chapter End Notes

https://discord.gg/arrQ8Eu2xK

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